

What is *Salvia divinorum*?

Salvia divinorum (pronounced SAL-vee-ah dee-vin-OR-um) is a perennial herb in the mint family that resembles common sage. The plant contains the hallucinogen Salvinorin A and is abused for the mind-altering sensations it produces.

What does it look like?

The *Salvia divinorum* plant grows in large clusters and typically reaches more than 3 feet in height. The plant is identifiable by its large, bright green leaves; hollow, square stems; and white and purple flowers.



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Salvia divinorum leaf.

How is *Salvia divinorum* used?

The leaves of the *Salvia divinorum* plant can be dried and then smoked or, while still fresh, wadded together and chewed. The drug also may be brewed and ingested as a tea. In addition, *Salvia divinorum* sometimes is converted into a liquid extract, which is then vaporized and inhaled.

Who abuses *Salvia divinorum*?

National surveys conducted to estimate rates of drug abuse do not include questions regarding abuse of *Salvia divinorum*. Thus, current levels of abuse are difficult to determine.

Most likely, the abuser population is limited, primarily consisting of teenagers and young adults who frequent “head shops” or who have been influenced by Internet sites promoting the drug.

Abuse of the drug poses an increasing concern to law enforcement officials in the United States, particularly in the Northeast, Midwest, and Pacific regions of the country.

What are the risks?

The abuse of *Salvia divinorum* can cause intense and debilitating hallucinations. Even smoking small quantities—one-quarter gram—can affect perception and senses. These effects can result in abusers harming themselves and others.

In addition, abusers report that the negative long-term effects of *Salvia divinorum* may be similar to those produced by other hallucinogens such as LSD, including depression and schizophrenia. Some abusers also indicate that long-term abuse can cause hallucinogen persisting perception disorder, or “flashbacks.”

Numerous individuals report experiencing negative effects during their first experience with *Salvia divinorum* and indicate that they would not use it a second time. Others report that the drug caused them to become introverted and unable to communicate clearly.

Other Terms for *Salvia divinorum*

Diviner's sage
Maria Pastora
Sage of seers
Ska Maria Pastora

Is Salvia divinorum illegal?

No, Salvia divinorum is not currently illegal. Salvia divinorum is not listed under the Controlled Substances Act. However, the Drug Enforcement Administration does regard Salvia divinorum as a drug of concern and is monitoring reports of the drug's abuse nationwide.

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Questions and Answers



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